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The Role of Parents and Health Professionals in Monitoring the Growth and Development of Preschool-Aged Children

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood development during the preschool period is a critical phase that influences a child's future health and developmental outcomes. At this stage, children undergo rapid growth in physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional domains. However, growth and developmental delays remain prevalent, often due to inadequate early monitoring. This study aims to examine the role of parents and health workers in monitoring the growth and development of preschool-aged children. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through interviews, observations, and literature review. The findings indicate that active parental involvement in providing stimulation, adequate nutrition, and developmental monitoring; supported by health workers through routine health assessments and health education; plays a significant role in optimizing child development. Effective collaboration between parents and health workers is therefore essential for the early detection and prevention of developmental delays in preschool children.

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INTRODUCTION

Preschool-aged children, defined as those aged 3–6 years, represent a critical period in the process of growth and development. During this stage, children experience rapid progress across multiple developmental domains, requiring optimal stimulation and systematic monitoring. Inadequate monitoring of growth and development may result in developmental delays that negatively affect children's readiness to enter subsequent levels of education (WHO 2020; UNICEF, 2019).

Monitoring child growth and development involves the measurement of physical growth indicators, such as body weight and height, as well as the assessment of motor, language, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Parents play a central role in this process, as they are the individuals closest to the child and engage in daily interactions. Meanwhile, health workers act as professional facilitators by conducting screening and early detection and providing health education to parents to support optimal child development (WHO, 2018; Black et al., 2017).

In Indonesia, child growth and development monitoring programs have been implemented through Integrated Health Service Posts (*Posyandu*), Community Health Centers (*Puskesmas*), and other healthcare services. Nevertheless, the implementation of these programs continues to face several challenges, including limited parental knowledge of developmental milestones, restricted access to healthcare services, and suboptimal collaboration between parents and health workers. These challenges may result in developmental delays remaining undetected at an early stage, leading to delayed intervention (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021; UNICEF Indonesia, 2020).

Based on these issues, a comprehensive examination of the roles of parents and health workers in monitoring the growth and development of preschool-aged children is required. This study aims to describe the contributions of both parties and highlight the importance of synergy in supporting optimal child growth and development. The findings are expected to increase awareness among parents and health workers and serve as a reference for the development of effective preschool child growth and development monitoring programs (WHO, 2020; Black et al., 2017).

METHOD

This study employed a literature review design by analyzing ten scientific articles relevant to the topic of the roles of parents and health professionals in monitoring the growth and development of preschool-aged children. The articles were retrieved from national and international scientific journal databases, including Google Scholar, PubMed, and Garuda, using the keywords *parental roles*, *health professionals*, *growth and development monitoring*, and *preschool children*.

The inclusion criteria comprised: (1) research articles discussing the roles of parents and/or health professionals in monitoring the growth and development of preschool-aged children; (2) articles published in accredited national journals or reputable international journals; (3) articles published within the period of 2019–2024; (4) articles with accessible full-text versions; and (5) articles employing qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods research designs.

The exclusion criteria included: (1) articles that did not focus on preschool-aged children; (2) articles that addressed only clinical aspects without involving the roles of parents or health professionals; (3) articles in the form of opinions, editorials, non-systematic reviews, or brief reports without clearly defined research methods; and (4) articles for which the full text was not available.

Articles that met the inclusion criteria were then systematically analyzed through the stages of data collection, content review, and result synthesis to obtain a comprehensive overview of the roles of parents and health professionals in monitoring the growth and development of preschool-aged children. The following are the ten articles included in Table 1. Data Charting.

Table 1. Data Charting

No.	Title	Method	Findings
1	The Role of Parents in the Growth and Development of Children Aged 3–6 Years	Qualitative	Parental roles have a significant influence on child development
2	Parents' Understanding of Early Detection of Child Growth and Development	Survey	Parents' understanding supports early detection of child development
3	Optimizing the Role of Families in Early Detection of Child Growth and Development	Qualitative	Educational interventions increase family awareness
4	The Role of Parents in Developing Early Childhood Literacy	Qualitative	Children's literacy develops through parental guidance

No.	Title	Method	Findings
5	The Role of Parents in Language Development during the Golden Age	Systematic Review	Parenting patterns influence language development
6	Increasing Parental Involvement in Child Growth and Development	Quantitative	Parenting programs enhance parental involvement
7	Socialization of the Parental Role in Child Development	Qualitative	Education improves monitoring of child development
8	Monitoring Child Growth and Development through Community Health Centers (Posyandu)	Qualitative	Posyandu is effective in monitoring child development
9	The Relationship between Family Role and Preschool Children's Growth and Development	Quantitative	Family roles have a significant impact on child development
10	The Role of Parents in Monitoring Child Growth and Development	Systematic Review	Parental involvement is effective in monitoring child development

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Role of Parents in Monitoring and Stimulating the Growth and Development of Preschool-Aged Children

Based on the findings from several journal studies, parents play a central role in monitoring and stimulating the growth and development of preschool-aged children. Parents are the closest individuals who interact directly with children in their daily lives, giving them substantial opportunities to observe children's physical, language, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Parental involvement in providing stimulation that is appropriate to the child's developmental stage has been shown to positively influence the optimization of children's growth and development.

Parents who actively communicate with their children, accompany them during play activities, and provide a safe and supportive environment tend to have children with better developmental outcomes. In addition, responsive and attentive parenting styles can enhance preschool children's self-confidence and social skills. These findings emphasize that the parental role extends beyond meeting physical needs to include psychosocial and cognitive aspects of child development.

2. Parental and Family Understanding of Early Detection of Child Growth and Development

Another theme emerging from the literature review is the importance of parents' and families' understanding of early detection of child growth and development. Adequate knowledge of developmental stages enables parents and family members to recognize early signs of developmental delays. Proper early detection can prevent more severe developmental delays in the future.

The involvement of the family as a whole, including fathers, mothers, and other family members, further strengthens efforts to monitor children's growth and development. Family support in the caregiving and monitoring process helps create a conducive environment for the growth and development of preschool-aged children.

3. The Role of Health Professionals in Monitoring Child Growth and Development

Health professionals play an important role in supporting the monitoring of growth and development of preschool-aged children through health services such as *Posyandu* and community health centers (*Puskesmas*). They are responsible for conducting growth

measurements, developmental screening, and providing education to parents regarding parenting practices, balanced nutrition, and developmental stimulation.

Monitoring activities carried out by health professionals enable early detection of growth and developmental disorders, allowing timely and appropriate interventions. Synergy between health professionals and parents is a key factor in improving the quality of growth and development monitoring for preschool-aged children.

4. **Educational and Parenting Programs as Efforts to Improve Child Growth and Development**

The review findings indicate that educational and parenting programs have a positive impact on increasing parental involvement in monitoring children's growth and development. These programs provide parents with practical knowledge and skills related to monitoring and optimally stimulating child development.

Through educational and socialization activities, parents become more aware of the importance of routine health check-ups and developmental monitoring. Parenting programs also strengthen collaboration between parents and health professionals, enabling monitoring efforts for preschool-aged children to be conducted more effectively and sustainably.

CONCLUSION

Parents play a key role in daily monitoring, providing appropriate stimulation, and meeting children's basic needs, while health professionals are responsible for health assessments, early detection, and health education. Strong synergy between these two parties is crucial to optimizing children's growth and development and preventing developmental disorders. Therefore, parents are encouraged to actively participate in child growth and development monitoring programs and to enhance their understanding of preschool child development. Additionally, health professionals are expected to continuously improve the quality of services and educational support provided to parents to ensure optimal child development.

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